

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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UNCLAS THE HAGUE 4860

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, NL

SUBJECT: DUTCH TRADE UNIONS AGAIN SEEK CONFEDERATION

1. SUMMARY: A LONG-SOUGHT AMALGAMATION OF THE THREE DUTCH TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS INTO ONE LARGE CONFEDERATION IS NOT IN THE CARDS FOR THE MOMENT, BUT A UNION OF THE TWO LARGEST MOVEMENTS HAS COME A HALF-STEP NEARER REALITY. CONFEDERATION IS TO TAKE PLACE ON JANUARY 1 IF MEMBERS APPROVE AND IF OPPOSITION BY SOCIALIST AND CATHOLIC INDUSTRIAL UNIONS CAN BE OVERCOME. FEDERATION LEADERS HAVE THROWN THEIR SUPPORT BEHIND THE VENTURE, BUT INDUSTRIAL UNION LEADERS COULD WRECK UNITY PROSPECTS. END SUMMARY.

2. BACKGROND: FOR AT LEAST SIX YEARS, HOLLAND'S THREE LARGE TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS, NEDERLANDS VERBOND VAN VAKWERENIGINGEN (NVV), NEDERLANDS KATHOLIEK VAKVERBOND (NKV), AND CHRISTELIJK NATIONAL VAKVERBOND (CNV), HAVE BEEN EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES FOR MERGER INTO ONE UNIFIED MOVEMENT. ENTHUSIASM  
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AND PROSPECTS FOR UNIT HAVE WAXED AND WANED DURING PERIOD.

CURRENTLY PROTESTANT CNV (235,000 MEMBERS) HAS OPTED OUT, FAVORING INSTEAD A CONTINUATION OF EXISTING COOPERATION WITHIN THE "OVERLEGORGAAN," AND UNBRELLA ORGANIZATION WHICH PROVIDES FOR CONSULTATION AND JOINT RESEARCH. TWO MUCH LARGER FEDERATIONS, SOCIALIST NVV (650,000 MEMBERS) AND CTHOLIC NKV (350,000 MEMBERS), HAVE, HOWEVER, CONTINUED TO SEEK CONFEDERATION AND EVENTUAL FULL MERGER. END BACKGRUND.

3. LEADERSHIP OF SOCIALIST NVV AND CATHOLIC NKV TRADE UNION FEDERATIONS HAVE RECOMMENDED THAT MEMBERSHIP GIVE APPROVAL TO CREATION OF FEDERATIE NEDERLANDSE VAKBEWEGING (DUTCH TRADE UNION FEDERATION) (FNV). UNIONS AFFILIATED TO NVV AND NKV ARE REQUIRED TO APPROVE BY NOVEMBER 6. IF APPROVAL IS GRANTED, CONFEDERATION WOULD BE CREATED ON JANUARY 1, 1976.

4. UNDER PROVISIONAL STATUTE DRAWN UP FOR FNV, LEADERSHIP DURING FIRST THREE YEARS WILL CONSIST OF NVV PRESIDENT WIM KOK AS PRESIDENT, NKV PRESIDENT WIM SPIT AS VICE PRESIDENT, NKV GENERAL SECRETARY H. VAN EEKERT AS GENERAL SECRETARY AND NVV TREASURER JO KAPPER AS THE CONFEDERATION'S TREASURER. STATUTE ALSO PROVIDES THAT FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR FNV BE DIVIDED BETWEEN NVV (TWO-THIRDS) AND NKV (ONE-THIRD). HEADQUARTERS FOR THE FNV WOULD BE IN THE NVV OFFICES IN AMSTERDAM.

5. ACHIEVEMENT OF CONFEDERATION IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN AT THIS POINT. NVV AND NKV WERE AT APPROXIMATELY SAME STAGE OF AGREEMENT IN APRIL 1974 ONLY TO RUN INTO ADVERSE REACTIONS FROM MEMBER UNIONS WHICH FORCED AN INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT OF THE JOINING. SIMILAR PROBLEMS HAVE AGAIN SURFACED. TWO LARGEST CONSTITUENT UNIONS, NVV'S 200,000 MEMBER INDUSTRIAL UNION AND NKV'S 140,000 MEMBER INDUSTRIAL UNION ARE PUBLICLY FEUDING AND THREATENING TO BLOCK CONFEDERATION. PROBLEM CENTERS AROUND NVV INDUSTRIAL UNION'S DESIRE TO EVENTUAL MERGER (BOTH AT THE FEDERATION AND THE UNION LEVEL) AND THE NKV INDUSTRIAL UNION'S FEAR THAT THIS WILL TAKE PLACE. ISSUE HAS BECOME ONE OF PERSONALITIES WITH NVV INDUSTRIAL UNION BOSS ARIE GROENEVELT AND NEW NKV INDUSTRIAL UNION LEADER PIET SPIJKER TAKING AFTER EACH OTHER IN DUTCH PRESS. THE ISSUE IS ALSO ONE OF TRADE UNION PHILOSOPHIES. GROENEVELT, WHO IS DUTCH LABOR MOVEMENT'S BEST KNOWN RADICAL, IS CONSIDERED BY SPIJKER AND OTHERS IN THE NKV INDUSTRIAL UNION AS BEING MUCH UNCLASSIFIED

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TOO FAR TO THE LEFT FOR THEIR COMFORT. SIZE AND STRENGTH OF GROENEVELT'S UNION ALSO THREATENS NKV.

6. SHOULD EITHER OF INDUSTRIAL UNIONS VOTE AGAINST FORMATION OF THE FNV, IT WOULD LIKELY BE SHELVED ONCE AGAIN. KOK AND SPIT ARE, HOWEVER, FIRMLY COMMITTED TO CREATION OF FNV AND HAVE PUT THEIR OWN PRESTIGE ON LINE IN EFFORT WIN UNION APPROVAL. AS A SOP TO GROENEVELT, PROPOSED FNV STATUTE SAYS THAT EVENTUAL MERGER

OF UNIONS IS NOT RULED OUT. THAT PHRASE IS STICKING POINT FOR SPIJKER, HOWEVER. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY A NVV OFFICIAL THAT KOK AND SPIT HAVE CO-SIGNED LETTER TO SPUJKER WHICH SAYS THAT UNION MERGER IS NOT OBLIGATORY EITHER.

7. SHOULD PROBLEMS BE IRONED OUT AND CONFEDERATION ACHIEVED, "OVERLEGORGAAN", CURRENT UNBRELL A SECRETARIAT, WOULD CEASE TO EXIST. HOWEVER, NVV AND NKV WOULD NOT LIKELY LEAVE THE SMALLER CNV ENTIRELY OUT IN COLD. IT IS GENERALLY THOUGHT THAT SOME SYSTEM WOULD BE CREATED TO CONTINUE COLLABORATION WITH THE CNV. GOULD

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